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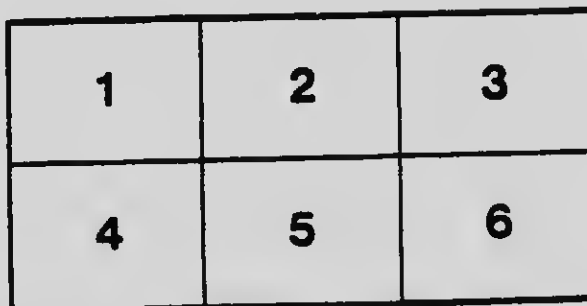
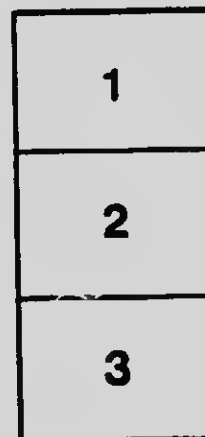
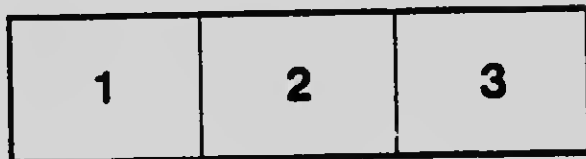
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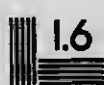
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**A Canadian Book  
of Months**

**Verse and Prose**

BY

SUZANNE MARNY *epsealy*

*Johnston, Mable  
Annesley (Sullivan)*



TORONTO  
WILLIAM BRIGGS  
1908

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JANUARY

## The Snow

It whirls down from the housetops,  
Flies stinging through the air;  
It flutters from low-hanging clouds,  
And blankets brown earth bare.

It lies in piles of feather weight  
Upon the frosty ground,  
It lingers on the roofs and trees,  
And mutes outdoor sound.

Next day it stretches splendidly  
Beneath a glittering sun,  
Bespread with royal shades of blue  
Before the day is done.

## January

This is New Year's Day! I spring up full of youth, yet not too full for much of the young, dainty harvest is garnered in memory's storehouse. Precious as gold the rest is, and how I will treasure it! No more golden hours will there be misspent in the question: "Whether am I happy or no?"

Long lie the blue shafts of shadow on the snow, gleaming in the late sunrise. A keen and delicious elixir is the air. As it rushes in, so comes to me a tribe of joyous thoughts of the sweet contrast of sojournings by the glowing logs and expeditions in the icy "out-of-doors." My mind even leaps forward to the keen hopes, wrapped chrysalis-like in the ennui of the winter's end, of the joyous yielding of the frost and the stirring balm in April air. Then a remembrance in penitential garb drops into my glorious humor, of an aged pilgrim long passed through any of the splendor of life. She has left behind her the most faded of life's beauties and dwells

## JANUARY

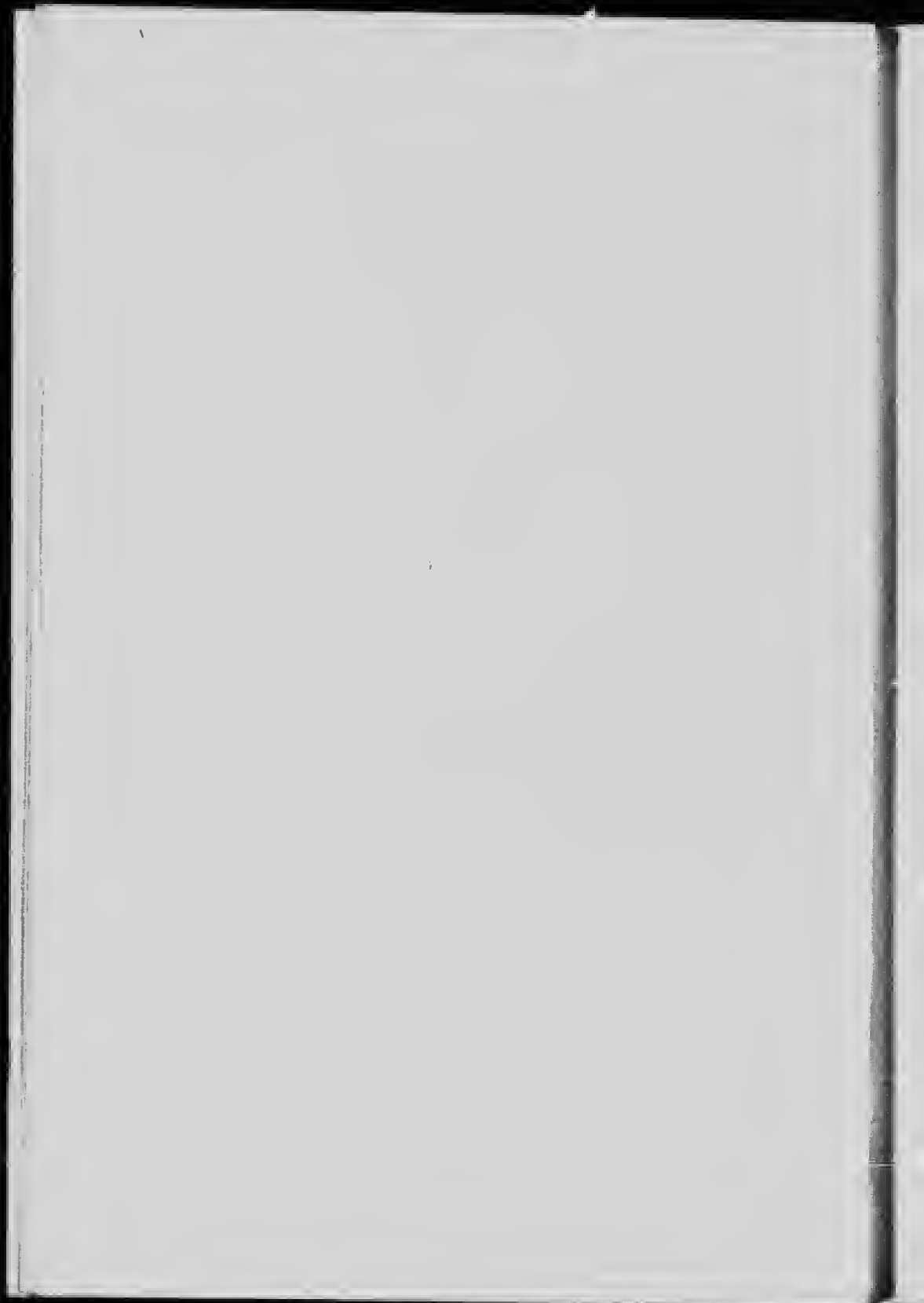
in realms of decay and sadness, buried in the ashes of the once glowing embers.

Her will I visit on this day of fresh opportunity and new leaves.

A hard coal fire burns in the old-fashioned grate of the closed-up little room. The atmosphere is heavy with old age. The old lady lifts a glazed and dog-like eye, with an expression faintly pleased and more lugubrious, for she must have sympathy with her ailments. Soon she heavily sighs forth the pain and watchfulness of her nights, the uneasy dreariness of her days. This done, she questions me about those of my family whom she knows, and speaks in a feebly gossiping way of her limited acquaintance. How cool and slender now are the ties of friendship for this poor ancient, bereft of wit, of liveliness, of lovable qualities. Almost repulsive to look upon is she, puffy, wrinkled, warted, sunken-cheeked and mumbling-mouthed, careless in attire and ablutions, and smelling of old age. Her memory is dim, her affections are enfeebled, she has little to give and less to get. A visit to her gives her the glimmering of a pleasure. Anon she speaks of a near anniversary of a death, of a birth of old, or a wedding.

## JANUARY

The mental atmosphere is stale and stifling; nothing new from the outside world circulates here. New events she cannot remember. A few old memories are brought forth, a few old questions asked, her aches and grievances are reviewed. Among the little pictures which break the monotony of the depressing wallpaper is one which shows her as a young girl, round of cheek, pretty and supple, taken in glceful and active teens. Another, young still, is taken with two or three children. Into what an unhappy slumber is falling this once active and beautiful flesh—alone in one room—sons, daughters dead, grandchildren, where? These leaves of her life are indeed fallen and bare, and alone is the dying stem. Scarcely able to go out or even up and down stairs alone, at her window she sits gazing day by day on the same road, the same tree. The same melancholy dusk ends each tedious day, the same long and uneasy night succeeds, to break in the dawn of another day of old age.



**FEBRUARY**



## Winter's Day

THE country in bright stillness rests,  
Blue shadows strike the dazzling snow:  
The naked trees shine in the sun,  
No teasing winds their branches blow.  
The hasteners toward some mellow light  
Which speaks a welcoming fireside  
Make frozen board-walks crack and ring  
In bitter cold at eventide.

## February

THIS four-o'clock beauty of a bright February afternoon has an enchanting stillness. The sun lays a veil of palest amber on the snow, which is cut by long cobalt shadows. All is breathless, radiant, quiet. The lawns lie a foot deep in unbroken snow, and the houses are heavily thatched with its soft weight.

We set off briskly in our sleigh, breaking the muffled silence with our sweet bells. As we leave the town streets, the white acres stretch about us, broken here and there by short lines of humble houses gleaming in the horizontal shafts of the sun.

In an hour we reach our destination, a red-brick, two-story cottage, fronted by a plantation of balsam trees of various ages and sizes. The cottage was built perhaps fifty years ago; French windows open out of the lower rooms to the surrounding verandah. Mary and Martha are the occupants of this house, and they are both blessed. Two elderly sisters with a modest competence, owning the red-brick cottage, to

## FEBRUARY

which appertains an old garden. They do most of their own work, which is easily managed for their simple tastes. They keep a boy who looks after their pony and trap, but no distracting females of a distracting class share the establishment with them. It is their own peaceful abode. And a dear old place it is. The light falls romantically through the verandah-shaded windows on their old-fashioned chattels. And through these windows may be sweetly seen the coming of each season. There is a plantation many years old, of crocus, violet, lily and daffodil. In the summer there are armies of phlox. Glorious sunshine shifts about the old beech trees, and it is a lovely, lonely spot. The summer visitor does not come to this suburb—townspeople desert it. But Mary and Martha are happy in it. Then, too, what a delicious plunge it is they take from the quiet house and garden (both being devoted travellers) to goodness knows where—Hungary, Turkey, Norway. The autumn deliciously descends here. The leaves litter the grass till the boy rakes them into aromatic burning heaps, the grape ripens for them on latticed fences, the tempered sun sheds a coppery glow in the beeches.

## FEBRUARY

Mary, in a short fur coat, bustles stoutly, and Martha glides, and soon the tea steams seductively and defiantly into the winter air. As we sip at our cheering cups we gaze into the evergreen-planted lawn. Ereet and dark, the mysterious trees strike their note upon the whiteness. We hold our breath with delight, and drink in the fairylike aspect of the frostbound spot. The blue shadows have inundated the land, and only one amber beam lingers in the dark group. It is nearly six when we take our leave, but the February afternoon is generous and the light dies slowly in the paling half pearl above us.

It becomes intensely cold, but there is no wind to bring home the chill to us. But what makes the bracing of ourselves against the cold a delight, and what enhances, by contrast, the frosty glow, is the thought that when darkness falls upon the land we shall surrender ourselves to the lighted warmth indoors.

The hour comes when we draw up to our own particular little sheltering pile, standing dark against the luminous star-pricked sapphire. The mellow window lights speed us in.

And who does not recall some specially de-

## FEBRUARY

lightful winter evenings when he has lingered over the repast with some dear two or three? When the lights have shone on fine table linen, and twinkled on the old silver, and touched up here and there the picture-frames on the dark panelled walls? The talk, animated at first, has become more subdued. Remote poetical topics have dropped into the conversation, as sweet and welcome as flowers in a wintry land.

The chat, sometimes slow, sometimes eager, has gone its uneven pace till the candles burned low and dripping, till a drowsy nine-o'clock quietude has stolen over the little company. Then there has been a shuffling back of chairs and a settling in the dim ingle-nook, where the flickering fire has sometimes illumined, sometimes left in the darkness, the face of speaker or listener. Later, the flickering has crystallized to a ruby glow; we have almost sunk into silence under its mesmeric influence.

If the bright, white beauty of the day was of a diamond preciousness, this ruby of glowing embers has laid its spell upon us, warmed our hearts and ripened our friendships.

MARCH

## The Crows

THE sky is pale and melting blue,  
The air is damp and sweet;  
I hear hoarse notes from neighboring pines—  
It is the crows' retreat.

Buds glistening with hopes of green,  
And birds a-fly with straws,  
And spongy hills of coloring grass  
Appear with those hoarse caws.

## March

CLOUDS are scudding low in a snow-laden sky. The drifts are piled high on earth. A whistling wind whirls the light fallen snow with the new-coming flakes into our eyes and stings our cheeks, filling our hearts with bitterness as we trudge about in one of the last unwelcome snowstorms of the year. For two or three days we resign ourselves to midwinter weather. Then a powerful sun appears, blazing with a late winter energy.

This morning I walk in the avenue of poplars. The air is frostless; heaven low and limpid, and busy with tearful clouds.

Hark! a discordant Caw, caw! rends the air. My eyes are suddenly opened to new sights. The brown, muddy earth is uncovered, nursing pools that reflect that tearful spring sky. Tiny fountains well up through the cracks in the sidewalks. By midday the gutters will be filled with rushing streams. And the poplars? The poplars are shining green and full of sapful odors.



## MARCH

At the end of the avenue I can see the willows  
in the ravine. Their wands have turned a bright  
brown, almost red. On the hills and terraces  
I seek and find patches of new green.

With deep content I live the day and go to  
rest at night.

Long before morning I wake—a half-for-  
gotten sound in my ears, of rumbling and mut-  
tering. Half dazed I lie. That surely is a peal  
of thunder. Then the sweetest sound in many  
a day, the fall of the first spring rain, earth-  
scented, and full of perfume as any shower in  
summer.

APRIL

## Early Spring

ONE time last year the earth grew green  
In early springtime sun,  
And when a cold day came, it seemed  
Spring's work was but half done.

I wandered forth upon this day,  
The hills were spread with green;  
But no sweet odors blest the air,  
Earth lacked a sunny sheen.

Though nature now forbidding lay,  
In dull ascetic calm,  
I laid her sweet austerity  
Unto my soul as balm.

## April

OUT of a close and crowded street-car we stepped, passed some dreary shops—half confectioners', half restaurants—and found ourselves in a promised land of fresh air and deserted nature.

A grey and broken sky hung low and wept into the lake. The lake, troubled and opaque with stirred sediment, threw broken wood and other débris upon the yellow sand. Here and there a great willow hung over the beach. All our surroundings oozed their perfume like a sponge dipped in scented water. The sky dripped its delicate spring rain, the soft wind puffed in our faces the odor of fresh water and decaying wood from the lake. The board-walk reeked of wet pine, and the unmistakable pungent willow scent was all-pervading.

We leaned over the railing of the promenade and thought of the coming weeks which would bring warmer days. Then the dusty cars would bring hundreds of fresh air seekers to the beach

## APRIL

—city children to whom the lake and sand would be a wonderful playground, who would find in the woods beyond enchanted playthings to be searched with wild delight—boys and maidens thinking on each other and only faintly conscious of their surroundings, and other nature lovers like ourselves, only not such fond lovers as we, who must have her even in a cool and tearful humor.

The raindrops fell smaller and scantier, and we strolled along the board-walk till we approached the gates of a park. We entered these gates, which were commanded by an ancient man seated in a little wooden building with a pointed roof, looking like a porch which had been detached from some old-time cottage. The ancient regarded us grimly from his shelter, where he sat warm and snug beside a little kettle singing on an oil stove. He thought us a little queer, no doubt, to wander forth on this uncertain day of early spring when we might be safely housed.

We walked a little distance up the broad park road till we found some steps on the side of a green hill. These we climbed, and found ourselves on a green point of land where we were

## APRIL

faced by an old two-storied verandahed cottage. The blinds were drawn, and it looked as if the owners might be gone from home. We prowled about to see if there was anyone near to deny us the shelter of the verandah. Behind the house was an old apple orchard, with beds of ribbon grass and grape hyacinth. We saw no signs of life except through the glass of a humble conservatory, where hung two cages, one containing two love-birds and the other a paroquet.

We returned to the verandah looking on the sward and sat down under its narrow but sufficient shelter. On the floor, as a decoration, sprawled a huge wooden snake, vicious and spirited in action. It looked like an ornament chosen by some retired seaman as a reminder of his days among the wonders of the deep. The roughcast house and its wooden trimmings were dimly white, and the small windows were pointed. The deserted dwelling and old garden had an out-of-the-world, soothing effect, and we sat for a little in a dream, seeing in imagination the owner of the little place, a man young long ago. Slowly he moved about his garden. With the gentle quietude of age he moved among the

## APRIL

old chattels that must be behind the dropped blinds. Peacefully he smoked his evening pipe on the narrow verandah.

Then a cloud broke, and the bright blue dashed us with happy unrest. We awoke from our day-dream of old age, and left regretfully the prim verandah of the old-time cottage, the rampant serpent, the old orchard and the purple grape hyacinths.

MAY



## The Butterfly

A FLUTTERING of yellow wings  
Through sunshine blots and shadow rings;

A seeking dance, through trillium flowers  
And violets, for remains of showers;

A poising high against the blue,  
Steeped in the springtime through and through!

## May

THE sky is palest blue this morning—pale with a springtime chasteness, lacking the crisp color given to it by the frost; without the blue intensity burnt into it by a midsummer's heat. These heavenly plains are flecked perhaps thrice by a cobweb of cloud, and in them rides a sun which mercilessly searches an unprotected earth, unshaded here save for the growing pines and the ghostly shades of the lightest of thickets.

This searching and merciless sun is breeding fast upon the earth, which already swarms with white-flowered strawberry plants, with new wintergreens, short grass, short-stemmed scentless violets, and lively ants. The grey twigs and branches, bare but a few days since, bristle with short, thick leaves.

This earth, which a few months ago mourned the passing of a lush June to a tarnished midsummer, and which rioted again in the decadent glory of October, which buried her dead and falling leaves in a pure and icy pall—this earth

## MAY

again responds to Sol and bears him young millions.

The world is alive with breeding.

The yellowish green of the light and penetrable wood before me is broken here and there by a dark-pointed spruce; above, the thinnest of white clouds streaks the blue; a delicate trilling breaks the silence. The ants hasten over the aromatic, heated earth, losing and finding their way among the tiny plants. The untravelled blue, the splendid sun, the twinkling leaves, the myriad plants and insects, that piping sweetness, the perfumed air—is it a sacrifice to God, a gift to me, an idyl for a poet? Lavishly lies its sweetness here to take or leave as we may.

JUNE

## Out of Doors in June

I SPENT the morning in a lovely field  
Where, 'gainst dark pines that did long, black  
arms wield,  
Stood some stray apple trees drest out in shin-  
ing green,  
Whose little twinkling leaves gnarled branches  
did half screen.  
Behind the trees spread forth the deep, deep  
blue—  
The summer firmament with light clouds stray-  
ing through.  
Some horses loosed for pasture here did sport,  
And cropped the grass like velvet green and  
short.  
The scent afloat the air was that of June,  
Of grass, and blossoms that we lose too soon.  
How sweet it was in that deserted place!  
Neglected orchard of some former days,  
Where apple tree stood side by side with pine,  
And pastured horse did to his comrade whine.

## June

THERE is turmoil, as ever, in the city, but uptown, where there is foliage, where trees and gardens abound, the day of perfection is here.

The chestnut trees have spread their fans to the fullest, and carry their blossoms as proudly as a beauty her bouquet. The maple flutters its thousand leaves to make a lovely shadow, not too dense, and elm and oak have finished their laey scheme.

In a shady spot on my grass plot I lie breathing the wet geranium's breath. A bee, tacking and humming in the breeze, plies between the shaded flower-bed and the honeysuckle on the sunny summer-house. A faint wind stirs the leaves of my book, and in the immense and distant dome the seanty white thickens or disperses gauzily.

I wander to the front of my garden and lean idly over the gate. Down the little street, objects seem to move in a leisurely golden dream.

## JUNE

In a spot of sunny air the flies hang and swing as if banded together by an invisible cord. Beyond is a vista of clear sunbeams and dappled shade.

At the door of an old roughcast house sits an old man russet with years. His face, his shaky legs, his knotted hands are beaten to their present ancient aspect by the mirth of childhood; the passions of youth, the loves of manhood, the emotions, strivings and disappointments of later years are stamped upon him.

Here he sits, a volume all but complete. A few quiet years—pain perhaps, lingering illness perhaps—a loosening hold on life, and the book will be closed.

He slowly, stiffly rises from his chair and takes his shuffling promenade, under the horse chestnuts, past a few houses to a street corner, and back again.

Lower down the street a woman leans at her threshold, talking to a peddler of greens. Her children at school, her husband at work, she is drawn into a few moments' pause from work in the calming air of this June morning.

In the distance are playing some young children, so far from me that I can scarcely hear

## JUNE

their voices. They seem to be playing so quietly that they strike no loud note in the tranquil movement of the day.

In the afternoon there will be gatherings in old gardens of women in flowing white or mauve or yellow, with here and there, maybe, a scarlet parasol. They will wander in the welcome sun of a late June afternoon, or linger in shades of huge old oaks, the gentle air shifting the pale blots of shadow and the mild sun-spots on their light garments.

June shades! Why the sweetest of all? I think, because the sun shines through such thin and tender green, which veils such brilliant turf, and because the air within these shades is afloat with odors of juicy foliage full of May rains and early summer dews.

And the June nights! In the air, fresh as a bath, float the scents of a thousand young things springing from the damp earth. Youth becomes a god breathing divine confidence to youth. The stars shine softly, sphinx-like and impenetrable. It is a magic world everywhere under these June stars. Tender things of like age are discovering that nature is delicious, that humanity is deeply interesting; are discovering for



## JUNE

the first time what is beautiful in literature and art; are lifting together the veil of the world's loveliness. To-night the heart of youth is opened. The shyest thoughts parade under the holy cover of this night. No ambitions are too high, no hopes too high. Lovers are inspired: their love cannot die. A divine fire will burn in them throughout the ages. The fascinations of the beloved will be everlasting for them.

Each year on June nights the wet syringas brush young cheeks in the darkness.

Wander in the summer night, dear youth; pour out your love and your confidence; the rich blossoms of coming years may never again touch those cheeks flushed in such lofty humor.

JULY

## Oh, Pass a Summer in those Groves

Oh, pass a summer in those groves  
That spring in north countree,  
Of bushy maple, spreading beech,  
And resinous balsam tree.

Oh, listen to that fluting bird  
Pipe, "Hard times, Canada,"  
Until he sleeps in piny nest  
Below the bright North Star.

## July

### The Lake

FORTH I fared in the crystal morning upon the blue and silver sheet, beneath a sky pale with the promise of a sultry noontide. The little lake was hill-girt, and held occasional islands, high and rocky or low and flat, dark with ancient pines or shining green with young growth of birch and alder.

I loitered across the waters and marked a small cloud that mounted the heavens like some white dove, the only thing that seemed to move in nature, a mate for my white boat.

And then my mood was changed, I had entered the shade of a ring rock which formed the side of one of the islands.

How things high and perpendicular have an awesome and rhythmical effect upon us. I cannot stand below a cohort of high old pines without being reminded of organ pipes and music. And now I seemed to move, caught in the shadow of

## JULY

this mighty rock, under a solemn spell. The world outside the shadow glanced and glittered, but I was in some majestic funeral procession where there should have been tragic music measured forth.

Awhile I lingered in the black waters, touching sometimes the lovely lichens on the stupendous rock. Then I escaped into the sunlight, for the precipitous side of the island at last lowered to a point. There I turned the corner and found on the other side a shallow cove of yellow sand shaded by alders, where the filtering sun dropped spots of gold upon the brown waters.

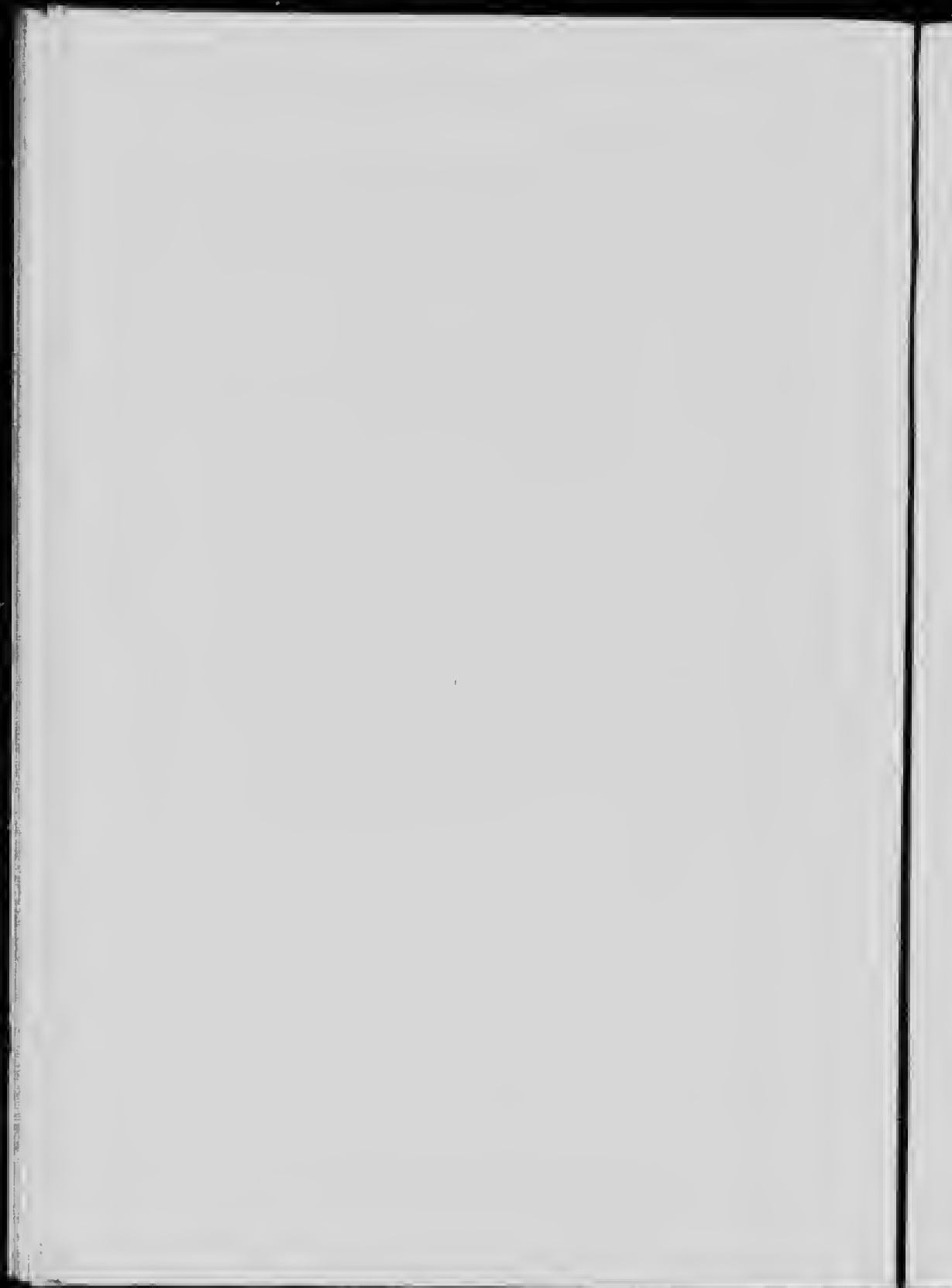
My boat slid softly ashore, and I ran up a vague little path and found myself on a rock where two or three pines sprang from the crevices; their sombre hue struck the pale radiance of the morning sky with one of nature's most felicitous notes. In their scant, gently moving shadows I paused. The rock beneath my feet was scattered with their faded needles. There I breathed the faintly aromatic air and entrapped in my soul forever the spirit of the fresh and solitary morning.

I began the ascent of the rocky island, and as

## JULY

I neared the summit the huge boulder was broken, and low aspens fluttered delicately from the moss-grown cracks. The pinkish masses of rock, reared against the blue, seemed like the stones of some giant cemetery. The black forms of sleeping earth beneath a midnight sky are not more awful than these sunlit solitudes.

A bridge of white clouds had spanned the sky. The verdure on the water-girding hills ranged itself tree on tree, forest on forest, and I stood breathless with them. They seemed a multitude gathered there waiting to be roused for some tremendous ceremony, waiting for some shining being to awake them with a blare of trumpet from the vast white cloud above them.



AUGUST



## The Petunias

A SULTRY day had come and gone:  
We thirsted for the rain,  
And rustling gently thro' the leaves  
At midnight down it came:  
And with its gentle rustling,  
Wafted through open pane,  
Was the sweet smell of petunias  
Washed in this midnight rain.

## August

YESTERDAY the earth sent up rays of heat as if it were brass that reflected the sun. The sky was cloudless, but pale and misty with heat haze. The sun towards noon reddened, dimmed and shrank behind the mist; not a leaf in the forest stirred. The roads of reddish earth were blinding like hot copper. The teams that passed upon them were caked with dust and sweat. The river glittered, and burnt sore and pink the faces of those who ventured up it.

The sun sank out of sight a light crimson; nor dews nor winds brought us relief at nightfall. We sat listening to the dry, late summer chirp of the crickets, and panted for breeze and rain.

At sunrise the next morning it was intensely hot, though the blue was entirely concealed by banks of clouds.

All morning we worked in the raspberry patch. How many green berries there were to

## AUGUST

be swelled and made juicy by the rain when it should come.

The heat was intense, and more suffocating than yesterday. Towards noon a rumble of thunder was heard, and all the berry pickers rejoiced. Presently we looked up to the tops of the elm forest skirting the berry patch; they stirred gently. Then their plumes swayed violently in the wind, as if trying to break the fast lowering and blackened clouds. Then there was a gathering of skirts and berry cans, for immense drops splashed upon us.

The smothering sweetness of the atmosphere was relieved by the freshness of the imminent contact between the earth and the storm.

Soon we were safely housed and watching the quickly forming rivalets on the garden path.

**SEPTEMBER**

## The End of Summer in the City

The people all seem tired out,  
The chestnut leaves are dusty,  
The sun has sucked the sapful grass,  
And left it brown and rusty.

The air hangs heavy on my chest,  
My springtime's hopes are dying,  
I long for damp October winds  
And gusts of wet leaves flying.

## September

LONG shadows stretch from the copse at the side of the hayfield where I sit deep in the long grass. The field, tinged with a light red, slopes upward to the right, fringed with low bushes against a bank of opalescent clouds. Before me, beyond a valley, is a strip of farm land with old grey wooden buildings. Behind the farm buildings is a strip miles long of dark woods, blue with distance and shadows of clouds. Rich and airy are the shadows where I sit; they cut the sunny slopes deliciously, the grass silhouetting its long round heads on the brightness beyond. The cloud pile mounts higher, with a thunderous aspect, and is marked like a citadel. The rough farm buildings prose of early risings, perspiring days, a going to bed betimes: hard work, few pleasures, and long silences in the starlit hours. The forest background crosses the horizon with its mysterious bar of seldom-trodden solitudes, purpling in the cloud shadows and greening in the sun.

This is my last afternoon in these wilds.

## SEPTEMBER

Henceforth they will spread themselves in my imagination in a more beautiful loneliness because of my desertion. My little house, wherein of late I was driven so early in the evenings by frosts and long nights, will haunt me reproachfully as I think of it standing so humbly among handsome forest giants, blinded with shutters, left without voice to cheer it; left with the rustle of dying leaf, with perhaps a cricket chirping in its wooden walls. Earlier and earlier will the road be lost in the blackening trees and the stars peep in a frosty sky. The darkness will be the more eerie now that the land is left to the few settlers, and those who play at country life have scattered to their cities.

In town again, how bleached the grass is in the park, how rusty the trees; one fancies the little groups of people seem faded, too. The old chestnuts about the streets cast their dappled shades on dusty pavements and stale boulevards. But under those shades I meet continually friends not seen for months; the air is charged with the emotions of picking up of human threads. The browsing pastoral season is over and the life of the city, always faintly or greatly dramatic, has begun.

## SEPTEMBER

Now we have days of stinging heat, or we shiver in turbulent rains. A busy spirit drives us here and there to prepare our indoors for a snug winter. Then flying summer with a backward luring glance calls to us again. A mildly glorious day draws us from town to the lake. Under the light shade of silver birches I face the blues of water and sky, whose meeting is dim in a mist of heat. There I marvel at the flight of summer, short as a breath, and at my many plans for it unaccomplished. Towards evening the equinox flutters a mighty wing and wafts us homeward.

On the home stretch the gas lamps are already twinkling. The neighbors' houses are darkening into silhouettes against the twilight sky. There is a crisp frostiness in the air, and with a thrill we realize the reviving change of season; that the light and open life of the long days of summer are over, that home and fireside are to gradually enfold us more and more in the months to come.

By seven o'clock the lights at home are lit and various small suns illumine the indoor world. In the hall, looming up here and there from the shadows on the wall, are some old prints of



## SEPTEMBER

scenes abroad in cottage and castle which recall the days when lives were lived almost without travel and when home was a world in itself.

On the dining-table a little constellation rides, making the faces like a set of rosy flowers, leaving the walls in the same old rich shadows of last year, with the old familiar objects picked out delicately by the candle-light.

My sitting-room is as full of lights and shades as a garden-plot with trees. There is the table with my reading-lamp, laden with volumes: yellow-backed foreign novels, sombre history books, richly bound books to be only tasted and laid down, a fluttering brood of magazines all shimmering with light amongst the surrounding mysterious shades. There is the green-shaded lamp that reigns over my writing-table, which is as cheerful and inviting as a bed of white flowers ready to be gathered into a bouquet and despatched to a waiting friend. There is my fire, frolicking like a will-o'-the-wisp in the shining mahogany of the old sofa and armchair, inviting me within its magic circle and dream-compelling glow.

OCTOBER

## Autumn

IN perfume of the dying leaves,  
In smoke of autumn fires,  
In trees decayed to purple hue,  
'Gainst dappled skies of waning blue,  
Strong summer now expires.  
These odours mild, these fading skies,  
Succeeding summer's fires,  
As reminiscent seem to me  
As thoughts of past desires.

## October

WE gaze on a world held moveless in an amber haze. Not a leaf flutters save to fall in its decay. The trees are stirless, like the seaweeds weighted by waters in an aquarium. The pale sky is streaked with light mares' tails. The beech and maple leaves lie curled and golden in the path. The odor of damp decay from these fallen treasure bewitches. A painful but delicious longing seizes us; a faint despair because we cannot grasp for our own the surrounding elusive beauty.

A white butterfly flits through the enchanted silence among the tangled fields where still lurk the mauve and purple Michaelmas daisies—last flowers of the year, austere and scentless.

The mares' tails throw their fleece across the sky, the crimson maple flaunts in the heights, and, epicurean lover of nature, note the frosty blue shades that cut the mellow light on the resting hills and fields.

## OCTOBER

The crisp leaf falls. The hills hold immovable their lapful of gold under the meek eye of heaven. And now is given for an hour, to all who will lie on the sweet faded carpet of earth and receive it, a blissful anodyne, October peace.

On the hillside in the late afternoon we look dreamily on the valley and the sun-bathed slope beyond. The glory enters into us like golden wine, and we embark on a sea of reminiscence. The foolhardy episode of the past seems to-day to have been a glorious feat. The wild escapades of old comrades seem full of prowess or graceful humor. All that we have suffered, all that we have endured, seems not lost, but fit to be counted up as gain beyond the flesh-pots of the present.

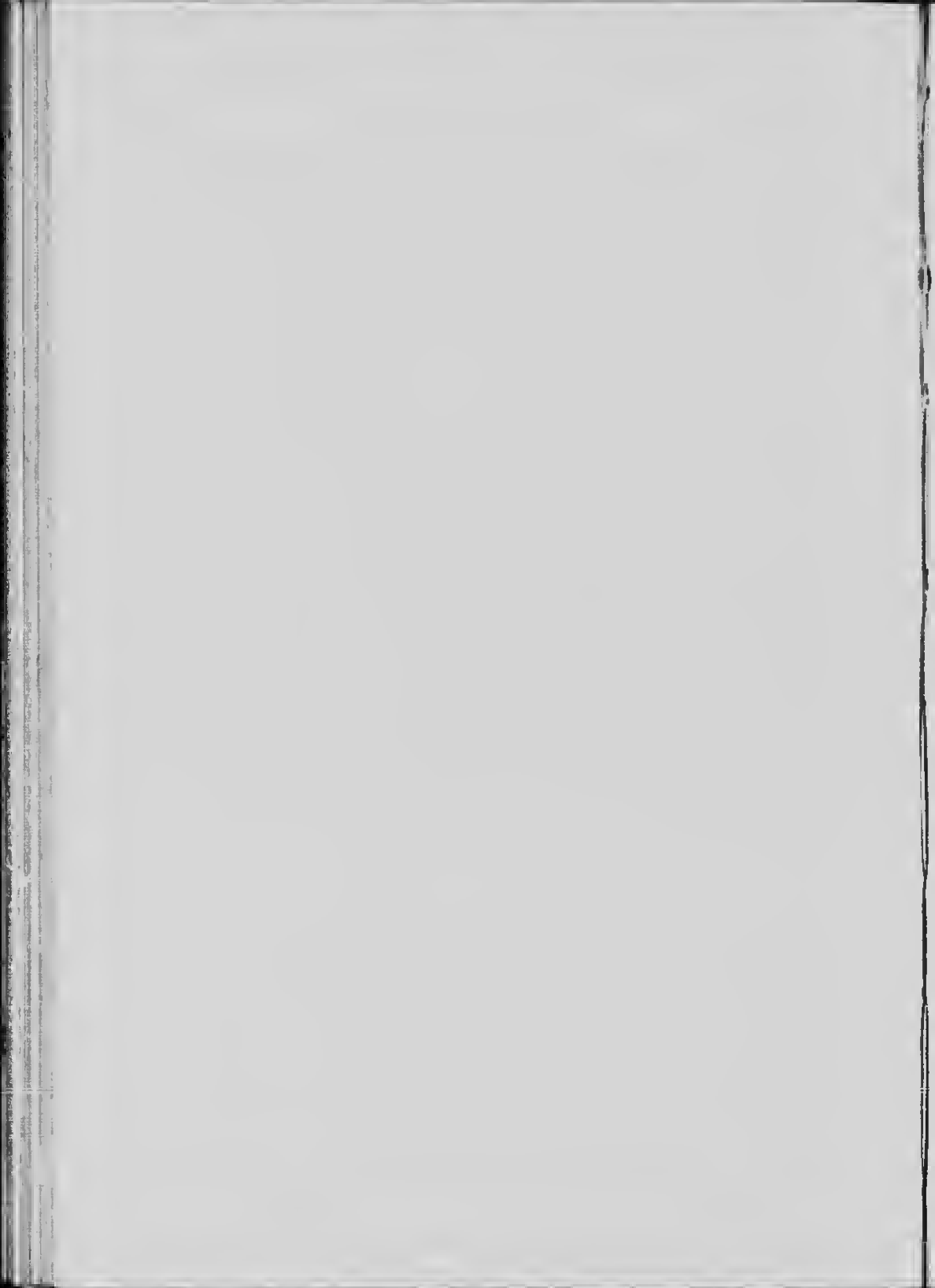
When the sun has sunk the air quickly chills, and we make our way home in the rich dusk, blue with the smoke of bonfires, redolent of damp leaves, heavy with cold, sweet dew—an eerie, fairy dusk, peopled with spectres of the past called up by our recent converse, and dogging our way homeward.

In the evening the wind rises, the same old wind that each fall blows slates from the roofs, rattles doors and shatters old gates. Not keen,

## OCTOBER

but velvety, it gains a wonderful swiftness, setting the pace for young spirits. Boys and girls in their teens stealthily desert the fireside to join in its frolic.

Outside in the light of the lamp are seen slender figures downy or bright of cheek. The signs swing in the gale, the gates slam, and the dead leaves rattle delicately. Off in the darkness can be seen shadowy forms waving lighted gourds with terrible faces. The group under the lamp shriek with excitement. Another gust, and off scuttle the children, almost as lightly as the leaves, into the darkness to join the band with the spectral gourds.



NOVEMBER



## November

To-DAY November is so clear,  
I scarce regret October;  
I scarce regret her gorgeous leaves  
In days so sweetly sober.

The trees stretch up austere grey,  
Stripped of their beauty tarnished;  
From lawns the flowers are taken away,  
The green lies all ungarnished.

## November

GREEN board fences and weatherstained, unpainted fences divide the small garden squares. Faded and rain-sodden is the grass; the flowerbeds heaped with dead leaves; the sapless vine twigs crawl like immense spiders; the naked trees stand dark against a dismal sky. A few faint markings remain of the first light snowfall. Beyond the fields, through a straggling copse, is a glimpse of a valley where sits a tall-chimneyed factory. A dismal, unkempt scene it is, the fringe of a large new town in a new country.

It is Sunday, and November, windless, smoky and depressing. The echoes of church-bells of years past are in my brain, with the remembrance of sad church-goings and sadder afternoon sojourns at home with the surroundings of Sunday literature and Sunday quiet, and the depression of a too inactive day. I have memories of an old-fashioned tea-table, with staid guests who were afterwards to attend the even-

## NOVEMBER

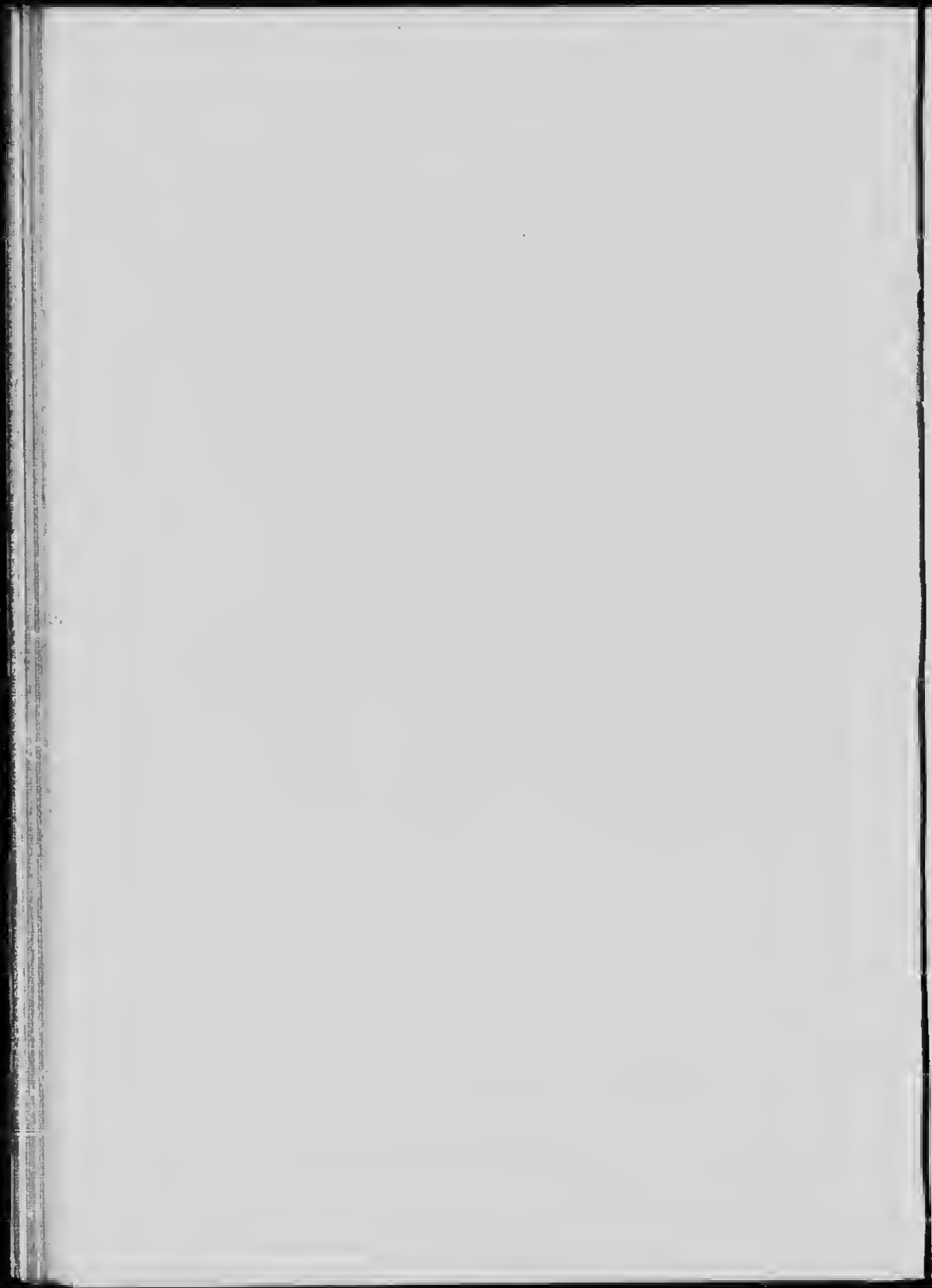
ing service. Then twilight and church-bells again. The tramp of people passing to the church. The dismal slackening of the bells, their ceasing, and the eerie approach of a Sabbath nightfall. Ah, then I was a prey to black thoughts, prickings of conscience and fears of eternal damnation. Now, tender qualms of conscience have passed away, but the old Sabbath feelings make a faint return at Sabbath sights.

Below my window stroll citizens from the crowded streets lower in the town. Fathers, mothers, and their little families stiffly and freshly dressed in clothes very typical of the ready-made counter of the departmental store. Dully enough they seem to make their way, but I venture to wager they are affected by no Sunday low spirits. They are enjoying, most likely, every moment of their Sunday at large. They are enjoying, probably, the acquisition of some new Sunday attire, or looking forward to the near purchase of something for their house, perhaps a new baseburner. Youths and girls I see also in crisp Sunday dress, the girls dressed with the obvious care that a once-a-week decorating suggests. They look commonplace, and it seems a sordid amusement to saunter

## NOVEMBER

along the board-walks in a suburb immersed in all the dreariness of a typical November Sunday.

These promenaders will turn their steps anon and wander to their homes in little crowded streets and enjoy their tea in peace and quiet. Sunday to them is their day of rest and liberty. November to them is November, nothing more. To me remains the dreary poetry of this grey day of rest with its distant echoes of doomful threats once so vivid to my childish imagination. For me the day is still heavy with souvenirs of a childish ennui.



DECEMBER

## Elegy

THE earth bears snowpiles wearily,  
The wind is sighing drearily,  
And shakes the windows cerily,  
And moans to me as here I lie.  
My armchair laps me round about,  
The firelight leaps in merry rout,  
But nought can chain my piteous thought  
Till it has wandered forth and sought—

A lonely person, miles away,  
Who made me happy as the day  
Is long, who made this fireside gay,  
Which now its cheer must waste away.  
The snow weights on him drearily,  
Imprisoned he so wearily;  
The wind sighs to him cerily  
Who once lived with me cheerily.

## December

THE scene has changed. Yesterday the earth was bare, the trees were dark and naked, desolate and austere; then the snow fell for twelve hours.

There is nothing that recalls to me so vividly days of the past as this sudden white aspect of nature, when the snow has outlined the branches of the old oak and thatched the grey roofs. The sudden whiteness startling one's morning vision brings back extraordinarily the glowing desire in one's child's heart of long ago to rush out and spend the livelong day using the snow for plaything and pastime.

In its snowy drapery the world from my window is just as it looked when I had no care beyond the hour. Just as it will look on days to come when I shall watch it from my armchair, feeble of limb and slow of mind. Just as it will look when my fire is burnt out, when I am done, and asleep beneath its clean, soft flakes, sent ever anew from some fairy heaven.

In the humble streets the roofs are piled with snow, the doorsteps laden, the shutters and



## DECEMBER

ledges finely emphasized, the tiny garden plots and bushes half buried. I never see that pure winter canopy over a little red-brick house, the snow heaped against the door and the lovely icicles dropping from roof and sill, but my interest is doubled in the nest of human beings gathered there, and the concentration of human interest within the four little walls, while the winter has its way outdoors.

On the hills the snow has laid its white sheet, and from the crevices desolately peep bare bushes that have shed their snowflakes. A fragment of fence marks the edge of the road that winds up the hillside. The dark, ungathered Christmas-trees peep cosily from their smothering load.

Where the old pines have been left to stand is a dim and hallowed spot. Like cathedral pillars they spring darkly from their shadowed floor. An imaginative child might seek beneath them for a shrine. The distant trees blend smokily with the storm-laden sky. Absolute stillness reigns. The low cloud closes in upon me and my hills. The air becomes full of movement. In delicious and eloquent silence the fairy-crystals march from heaven to earth.

LYRICS



THE budding branches catch the sun  
That sheds light mild and yellow,  
They bathe in air devoid of frost  
That laps them damp and mellow.

## Spring Morning

THE sky to-day looks most immense,  
It is so high and blue;  
The chestnut greens are most intense,  
With the sun shining through.  
The myriad twinkling tender leaves  
That clothe the once bare trees,  
The million million tiny sheaves  
That grass the once bare leas,  
Remind me of a glassy ocean  
By a zephyr set in rippling motion,  
Or of an air oppressed with silence  
That sudden breaks with music's violence.

WHEN lilac blossoms burst the green,  
In harmony bizarre,  
When dandelions dot grassy sheen  
Like little suns that are  
Irradiate in a verdant sky  
In lieu of one azure,  
Content sets smiles upon my face,  
And joy its emblazure.

## The Shelter

THE rain falls down,  
My roof to crown  
    With rolling diamonds,  
Which fall on me  
From the scented tree  
    When the wind shakes its fronds.

---

## The Ephemeral

WHEN the sun looketh into  
The land of my day,  
    I am borne in his yellow light.  
Through silver-aired morning,  
    Gold afternoon's heat,  
    I flit till the purple night.  
Then the dews wet my wings,  
And embalm me to death,  
    And Hesper's my funeral light.

## The Upland Park

I saw the upland park before me roll  
    In thousand thousand grassy, flowery ridges,  
I saw the billowy lengths in heaven stroll,  
    Spanning the blue with hundred hundred  
    bridges.

Each clump of grass, each line of flowers gay,  
    Each clustering clover patch that dots the  
    plain,  
Is searched and sweetened by a sun's pure ray,  
    And washed and cleansed by purifying rain.

Sometimes a zephyr gentle, soft and kind,  
    Moves in the ridges' yielding feathery crests:  
Sometimes wheels thro' a wild and rapid wind.  
    This precinct never in stagnation rests.



## Overhead

A BLUE for a bird to soar in,  
A height for the soul to glory in,  
And to break its fall to earth again  
The elms extend their arms between.

---

## Evening

THE sun has sunk and left the world  
A dusky green above impearled,  
Whose sweetness now draws many a lover  
To walk beneath its jewel cover.  
Now curious star and envious planet  
Pierce the pure pearl anew each minute,  
Till, pricked by jealous star and starkin,  
The pearl begins to pale and darken.  
To walk seems groping after sweetness,  
Until the moon with stately fleetness  
Blots the heavens' sapphire face,  
Outstrips the stars that try to race,  
Holds the night in worship breathless,  
Drives lovers thinking love is deathless.

## Summer Night

O GLIMMERING ground,  
And shadowy trees,  
Lucent, one star-lit sky,

By the unseen choir,  
Night's swishing breeze,  
Thou'rt spoken in melody;

And dew-drenched sweets,  
That no one sees,  
Breathe thy soul's perfumery.

## Dusk in the Village

THE night-hawk draws his twang across  
The dusky paling sky,  
The poplars and the elm trees rear  
Their blackening plumes on high.  
Beneath their shades the village folk  
Stroll, and the children pry  
In the fearful gloom to see if ghosts  
In those shadows hang anigh,  
And mumbling voice and stifled laugh  
Answer love-making sly.

Now range the towering, black-plumed pines  
Against a solemn sky,  
Where watch the glittering ranks of stars  
The awful pageantry.

## The Leaves

IN this elfin spot, so populous with leaves,  
Each leaf meseems a fairy green that cleaves,  
Until a giant autumn wind doth come  
To snatch it on his wings away from home.

---

WHERE the orange lilies shake  
Across the grassy mounds,  
On the hill above the lake,  
There my spirit, out of bounds,  
Shall flash into the ether,  
Or skim the liquid blue,  
Free of the clay beneath her  
That wakes nor sun nor dew.

---

THERE is no perfume that I better love  
Than that a country road exhales in summer  
When dews descend and evening pales the grass.

## Summer Afternoon

THE little haw trees in the sun  
Are withered dry and brown;  
Thro' their mazes sleepy, browsing sheep  
Are sauntering on the down.

In the blue above my drowsy eyes  
The little white clouds swam,  
Like sails upon an azure lake  
When summer airs becalm.

Long, long the clouds above me hung,  
In blessed holiday,  
In the gait of the ambling, browsing sheep.  
Mesmeric soothing lay.

The dignity of nature's rest  
Was turned to essence fine,  
That swam in my surrendered veins.  
Nirvanic anodyne.

## The Thunderstorm

A HEAVY and oppressive air  
The whistles pierced clear,  
Once goldly distant in the sun,  
The gloomy hills loomed near.

The crickets and the grasshoppers  
Sang loud their song of drought,  
And in the aspens and the ferns  
There stirred no breezy rout.

The flowers and the arid earth  
Exhaled a dusty scent  
Into the sultry, heavy air  
'Till the clouds should be rent.

But thunder rattling wheeled at last  
Above the lowering roof,  
Until the clouds no longer could  
Refreshment hold aloof,

But filled each tree's beseeching arms,  
Each flower's greedy face.  
Down tender stems and grizzly trunks  
Poured out in rainy race.

## The Drought

THE maples in the garden,  
And the wild cherry tree,  
The scented, hot petunia,  
The gauzy, bright poppy.  
The pines that raise their purple  
From beds of bracken fern,  
The berry in the distant swamp.  
All longingly discern  
The storm-cloud and the thunder,  
And, perishing with heat,  
Their prayerful incense offer up,  
The clouds to break entreat.

## Past Summers

Oh, what a summer I have often seen  
In radiant fields of tangled raspberries,  
The berries hanging crimson in the green  
Enticing as the fruit that made man wise.

There larkspur wild and ripening goldenrod  
Climb o'er the lichened stones and grey snake  
fence,  
And pigeon berries in the bleaching sod  
From their green fans blaze forth vermilion  
glance.

There up the slopes the coloring boulders gleam,  
Forcing their way the varied mosses thro',  
The pine trees climb the cliffs the stones between,  
And mount to wave their black against the  
blue.

There on the lake the sunlight dazzling breaks,  
The waters hold the sky in brilliant show,  
Or in the shaded shallows where they take  
Their clear brown color from the stones below.



## PAST SUMMERS

Above this lake I've sometimes watched the  
clouds

Stretch in stupendous bridges mile on mile,  
Till for the hot sky they have made their  
shrouds

And broken in the storms' midsummer vial.

From Sol I've refuged in a towering wood,  
Mid fungus bright and thickset lordly fern,  
If those giant pines intrude on Heaven should,  
The treading angels for their shade might  
yearn.

And then I've groped thro' bracken and thro'  
spruce,

Or faltered on a faintly glimmering road,  
Amongst al' things that sweetest are in dews  
I've roamed till Heaven's lights are all abroad.

## Suggestion

THE gay pomp of this August solitude  
Where bold, intensely blue, the summer sky  
Backs trees' and ferns' luxuriant magnitude,  
Transparencies the sun illumined by,  
Makes me believe that from the woods beyond  
Will dash a nymph by ravenous satyr chased,  
Or some Diana and her girls ablond  
In sunshine, white-skinned, unashamed, unlaced.

## Afternoon

THE sun has soothed the lake to sleep  
With hot mesmeric rays,  
Round the white boat the water's glass  
Breaks up in lapping lays.

The hills bask warmly, fold on fold,  
In utter hazy peace ;  
The moveless woods on the nearer ones  
Stand like a green, thick fleece.

The roads lie coppery, mile on mile,  
Like serpents satiate ;  
To look on them to sleep doth wile,  
So their heat doth radiate.

The sleeping house on the sun-baked lawn  
Seems burned till none's alive,  
And the clacking fowl about the yard  
Seem all that do survive.

## A Summer Siesta

ONE summer day, in siesta time, I lay upon my  
bed,  
But I did not see the bare white walls nor the  
blankness overhead;  
From my book of staid philosophy my spirit  
rushed outdoors,  
And before my drowsy fancy lay spread the  
grassy floors  
Of August fields all bleached and tanned and  
heated in high sun,  
Where the Singer leaped from blade to blade  
with wing snaps in his run.  
I saw a road stretched white with dust thro'  
heated farm and wild,  
Until it entered where a wood and shady wel-  
come smiled  
Invitingly. This wood's green leaves could rest  
the eyes' glare,  
And cool the skin of dusty souls that chanced to  
linger there.

## A SUMMER SIESTA

Beneath my blind I peeped and saw lengthening  
upon the lawn  
The shadows of some little pines; methought I  
must be gone  
To a lovely bathing place I knew, where the  
alder bushes' shade  
Made the water brown, and the peering sun  
rendered it golden-rayed.  
Thereto I ran, therein I leapt, and summer lux-  
ury deep  
I tasted there as I felt cool floods like silken  
draperics creep.

## Looking Forward

THE chipmunk's in the hazel bushes climbing,  
Gathering nuts for his winter house a lining,  
And I'm in August fields, the sky and woods  
    in-drinking,  
Hoarding them up for snowbound winter  
    thinking.

---

THE sky a lingering daylight holds  
    At this belated hour,  
The pines strike there in lacy black  
    Their minaret and bower;  
The stream the frosty, gem-like stars  
    Repeats like rockets' shower.

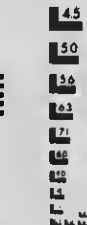
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A cow is crashing through the hazel trees,  
Her bell is clanking at her stumbling knees.  
Now vanishing, now glimmering white and shy,  
The dewy road runs to the fading sky.  
The evening star pricks through the vast pale  
    peace,  
And beaming revels in its lonely lease.



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## A Garden

I WALKED, shut in from London town,  
Through paths all coolly watered:  
In shady ends of vista's green,  
Stood beasts ne'er chased nor slaughtered.  
And goddesses of mouldy grey,  
With jars forever lifted,  
And little sturdy boys of bronze,  
Whose shoes a fountain sifted.  
The prim geraniums sat in beds  
As fashion then directed,  
The boundaries and hedge of box  
Conventional minds reflected.

## October

A MILLION leaves around me lay,  
A rustling, mottled carpet;  
The naked trees against the grey  
Their serried twigs now markèd.

A lurid sun made soft the air,  
That too soon would be frosty,  
This last of Autumn was so fair,  
Too soon it would be lost me.

## Meeting Out of Doors

THIS afternoon this field was green  
Beneath a mild autumnal sun,  
The copse of maples at its edge  
With red and yellow glories shone,  
And men and maidens strayed around,  
And tore the autumn glories down.  
To-night the moon shines silvery cool  
On a deserted, silent field,  
The copse of maples at its edge  
In stillness stands and shadow dense.

I steal across the silent field,—  
To-night it all belongs to me,  
And not a soul there is in sight,  
But no—a rustle 'neath the trees,  
A shadowy form I see is there.  
A step, and in the shadow dense  
I find my loved one waiting there.  
A whispered word, and then we sit  
Upon the fragrant dying leaves.

## MEETING OUT OF DOORS

Our words seem spoken long ago,  
The moonlight shows his eyes aglow;  
A moment on my dusky hair  
And rounded cheek they rest,  
And then his arms round me he throws.  
There is no rustle of the leaves,  
There is no wind among the trees,  
No bird-notes pierce the silent air:  
I know his bosom to mine cleaves,  
I feel his heart's wild beating there.

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I THRUST my head one freezing night into the  
outer air,  
With upward look I turned it then, and I saw  
blazing there  
A bunch of stars as thick as bees,  
Like showers that to diamonds freeze,  
Suspe ! in the air.

## Churchyard

ALTHO' I came full young here,  
Still there are vounger far,  
Nor do I mind trowd here,  
Silent as they are.

There's much that's left behind here,  
But think of what one gets;  
'Tis bright, 'tis cloudy peace here,  
A balm and no regrets.

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## Christmas Music

THE earth wears a white and glittering dress,  
Beneath the Christmas sun,  
The evergreens spread their fingers out,  
White festive gloves to don;  
The Christmas bell eries "Ding-dong-dell!"  
And the boys "Merry Christmas!" shout.



